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Senate

The Senate met at 1 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Father, author of life and giver of life everlasting, we raise our hearts to You. Lift us, today, into Your light, love, purity, and blessedness as we seek to honor Your great Name. Keep us from hasty shortcuts that lead to failure. Rather, help us to pursue integrity, righteousness, and honor.

Strengthen our lawmakers for this week's labors. Fill them with Your presence, guide them with Your comfort, and energize them by Your spirit. May they never shut their ears to the cries of the least in our Nation and world. Rather, may they join You in bringing true freedom to the marginalized.

Lord, we ask your special blessing on Dr. JOHN BARRASSO as he is welcomed to the Senate today. We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 25, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CARDIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following any time used by the leaders, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 7 p.m. tonight. The time is equally divided and controlled between Senators KENNEDY and ENZI or their designees. During this time I expect there will be speeches on H.R. 800, the Employee Free Choice Act, and S. 1639, the Immigration bill.

At 7 p.m. Senator SESSIONS will be recognized to speak for up to 1 hour. There are no rollcall votes. At 3:15 the newest Member of the Senate will be sworn in, JOHN BARRASSO, who is an orthopedic surgeon from Wyoming. We welcome him here but with some degree of sadness, because you are forced to comprehend and think about Craig Thomas whom I had such great admiration for. As I have said before, Craig Thomas and I did not vote very much alike, but we shared a great belief in the sovereignty of our two States, two sparsely populated States, Wyoming and Nevada, and of course this great country of ours that we both have such affection for.

We welcome Dr. BARRASSO. More will be said about this later.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that if any quorum calls occur during the debate until 7 p.m., they be equally divided between the sides controlling time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LAKE TAHOE FIRE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in the State of Nevada, one of the things we so appreciate is this great treasure we share with the State of California, Lake Tahoe, which Mark Twain called the fairest place in all the Earth. Some have said he said: The fairest picture the whole Earth affords. But the picture we get from Mark Twain is it was a beautiful place, and it is. There is only one other lake like it in the world, and that is in Russia. It is a wonderful alpine glacial lake about a mile deep.

It is a wonderful resource we share with California. But as we speak, there is a fire raging on the eastern side of the lake. It has, at last count, burned 2,500 acres, four square miles. It has engulfed and destroyed 250 homes; 500 more are in danger of being lost. Only 10 percent of the blaze has been contained.

One bright spot in this tragedy is that as of now, no injuries have been reported, and we hope these residents and emergency teams remain safe.

Many of these firefighters live in the area. They are battling this fire while their own homes are in danger. If we think about that for a moment, their own homes are at risk, their own families are in harm's way, and they are working to protect the homes and families of others. That is real bravery, and that is what a firefighter is all about. We owe a great deal to these men and women. We will surely owe them much more when this fire is brought under control. There is no way

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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